

On the Chemical Mechanism of Gastric Secretion.

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It has long been known that the introduction of certain substances into the stomach provoke a secretion of gastric juice. This is regarded as in no sense depending upon mere mechanical stimulation of the mucous membrane, and it has been thought that the nervous mechanism of the gastric glands may be susceptible to certain local chemical stimuli.

On the analogy of what has been held to be the mechanism at work in the secretion of pancreatic juice by Bayliss and Starling, it is probable that, in the process of absorption of digested food in the stomach, a substance may be separated from the cells of the mucous membrane which, passing into the blood or lymph, later stimulates the secretory cells of the stomach to functional activity. The following observations support this view:—

If an extract in 5 per cent. dextrin of the fundus mucous membrane be injected into the jugular vein, there is no evidence of secretion of gastric juice. If the extract be made with the pyloric mucous membrane, there is evidence of a small quantity of secretion. With dextrin by itself there is no secretion.

Extracts of fundus mucous membrane in dextrose or maltose give no secretion; extracts of pyloric mucous membrane give marked secretion; dextrose or maltose alone bring about no secretion.

If extracts be made with commercial peptone, it is found that no secretion occurs with the fundus mucous membrane, a marked secretion with the pyloric mucous membrane; the peptone alone gives a slight secretion.

If the extracts be made by boiling the mucous membrane in the different media, the effect is just the same, that is to say, the active principle, which may be called "gastrin," is not destroyed by boiling.

Finally, it may be pointed out that such absorption as occurs in the stomach apparently takes place in the pyloric end. With the pig's stomach, in which the true cardiac region differs from the typical fundus region in having only simple glands as in the pyloric, extracts of the cardiac region in general have the same efficacy in promoting secretion, as do pyloric.

